MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Oral History Project

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NOTE TO READERS:

This transcript includes edits from interviewer Lourdes Nicholls (2023). Nicholls wished to make minor edits. Smaller edits are incorporated into the body of the transcript. Larger edits are footnoted. As a result, this is not a verbatim transcription of the audio interview.

INTERVIEW:

[Tape 1, Side A]

LN: Are you joking?

FK: [indiscernible]

LN: Oh my god.

K: Now we know where she got it from.

FK: "My daddy dropped me."

LN: I used to do that? I don't remember doing that at all.

K: You had the flower child.

LN: I know that is, I mean that really like makes me think of the '60's because I don't think anybody does that now.

MK: Michelle, how old are you now?[1]

LN: Twenty-two.

MK: Twenty-two? Jefferey is 21 and Alyssa 20.[2] Oh.

LN: I remember that hitchhiking thing and I didn't know that I used to stand. Was it often that I would stand out and do that?

FK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LN: All by myself? Would anyone pick me up or what?

FK: No, you were so little I don't think anyone knew you were there.

MK: What if someone picked her up? My god.

FK: I would be watching her.

[1] LN: "My Japanese family called me by my middle name – Michelle."
[2] LN: Jefferey is Kieko's son

LN: I remember on the train tracks over there when Dad – I remember biking with you too, you know, but I remember that time when he decided to bike ride on the train tracks with Alyssa and I and then we fell and were all cut up and we went to get push ups at the dairy.

K: Remember the time when Alyssa got her foot smashed in the door at the market.

LN: I remember running in to get you, Mom, in the house – because we were playing tag.

K: It ran over her toe.

MK: Oh gosh. Ouch.

LN: Those traumatic things you know just – she still has a mark on her toe.

FK: Oh.

K: I can see the three of you sitting here Michelle, Jefferey, and Alyssa.

LN: Wow, that's neat [referring to television].[3]

K: There's so much on Indonesia, Malaysia, Taipei this year. Wow, look at that.

FK: I think that none of the faces were very good because they put sunglasses on all of them.

LN: I remember going to the Rose Parade.

FK: Oh yeah.

MK: [Speaking Japanese]

K: One time, we went more than one time.

LN: Yeah, we went a couple times.

MK: I went once two years ago, my girlfriend took me.

K: We went once in high school and then I remember taking you and Jefferey – too many people.

MK: Too many people.

[3] LN: "We were watching the Rose Parade."

LN: Do you, Grandma or Auntie Michi, do you remember anything about the 20s? You know the quote, "the way we think of the 20's right now," little flappers and things like that? Do you remember?

FK: We used to have dresses like that – the 1920s style dresses.

K: Yes, they were only eight and ten.

MK: We were always dressed alike until we went to high school.

LN: Oh really? Wow and what do you remember?

MK: In high school we had to dress alike because it was uniform.

FK: You guy were in some movies.

MK: Oh yeah. My dad, I told you, was a jack of all trades. He was also an actor so he appeared in many of the Sessue Hayakawa pictures.[4] Sessue Hayakawa was a well-known Japanese actor in Hollywood in those days, and so we would appear as kids. In one film I appeared as a boy and went to Big Bear Lake for location.

LN: And would you guys talk in them? Or were they silent?

MK: Silent picture in those days and then when Sessue Hayakawa picture appears on the theater, we had to go to – dance or whatever up here on stage.

LN: What do you guys remember about the '50s or '60s?

FK: Your auntie making those huge mohair dice.

K: Angora.

FK: Angora dice to hang on the windshield – fluffy, knitting.

[4] Kintarō Hayakawa (1886 –1973), known professionally as Sessue Hayakawa, was a Japanese actor and a matinée idol. He was a popular star in Hollywood during the silent film era of the 1910s and early 1920s. Hayakawa was the first actor of Asian descent to achieve stardom as a leading man in the United States and Europe. His "broodingly handsome" good looks and typecasting as a sexually dominant villain made him a heartthrob among American women during a time of racial discrimination, and he became one of the first male sex symbols of Hollywood.

K: They were like 25 cents a ball. Ten grams of angora.

LN: Twenty-five cents? And was the Super Yarn Mart as fun as it was when we were little?

K: No, we worked a lot harder.

FK: We used to work when we went.

LN: So did we.

K: Well we didn't –

MK: Dessa went to work too. And Dessa worked at Bullocks' too, stock girl.

LN: And what about the '60s? JFK?

FK: Vietnam War. We used to have bumper stickers on our car, "Make Love Not War."

LN: You did? On the Barracuda? Did I tell you I went to the airport in a Barracuda? When Andy and I went to the airport? My little brother Dave he has a Barracuda.[5]

FK: Your sorority?

LN: No, Andy's fraternity brother, but I was a little sister. He was my little brother and he has a Barracuda. The gas tank doesn't work, the speedometer doesn't work, nothing works, but he loves it. He loves it so much, he thinks it is the greatest thing. I go, "Do you ever run out of gas and he says, "Yeah, all the time, you know, I run out of gas all the time," but he loves that car and it's so old, it's so neat. I said my mom had a Barracuda too, cause my dad used to drive around in it.

K: I told him, your mom got the car, Auntie didn't get the car. Don't feel bad.

FK: But I paid for half.

K: I paid for the whole thing sweetheart.

[5] LN: in the fraternity

LN: But Dad said that he used to – you'd let him use the car, and then all of his fraternity brothers would be like, "Oh! You got the 'Cuda!" They would all drive around in it.

FK: Over and over. He never told me that.

LN: Sorry. Sounds like fun.

FK: It won't be the first thing he didn't tell me.

LN: Do you want to go to bed Grandma? Are you getting tired?

CT: Yeah.

LN: Sorry. So you weren't a hippie?

FK: Yeah, she's getting around pretty good.

LN: She's pretty fast.

FK: Yeah.

LN: I remember being in Dessa's wedding. Remember getting fitted, going to that place over and over. Trying to get in the dress.

MK: Oh boy.

LN: I remember. How old was I then?

K: Three?

LN: Three?

MK: No. 1971.

K: Jefferey was three.

FK: 1971, four.

LN: So I was four. I remember the wedding. I still have that dress.

MK: *Kawai*.[6]

[6] Pretty in Japanese.

LN: I thought that was the most beautiful dress.

K: Yeah, that was nice.

MK: Oh, that was so cute.

FK: That's one of the things I have in my house. I just saw it the other day.

LN: No, I knew you had the dress. I was just going to say. I have a bunch of stuff over there. I remember kinda a lot. I mean. It doesn't seem like it. It's all kinda blurry.

MK: Blurry.

LN: Yeah. I remember when we moved, I should tell my mom this but when we moved from here and my mom was saying, "Say goodbye to Kachan, you're not going to live next door to her anymore," you know and –[7]

K: Do you remember me riding up with you and Brownie.[8]

LN: You know what I remember? I remember riding up and we stayed in a hotel along the way and I remember you were the last one to fall asleep and I was falling asleep and all I could see was your cigarette glowing – and I was getting so worried like, oh no, what if, you know, it burns a hole? I was so worried.

K: Oh gosh, here we drive up in Fumi's little Datsun with that Siamese cat. I'm telling you for 400 miles that cat was going, "roar."

LN: He was the worst.

K: All the way up.

LN: Oh, I remember when Riggy took the kitty, MiMi, that was traumatic.

MK: Uh.

[Break in audio]

[7] LN: Chiyo Konishi is Chie's mother, Lourdes' great-grandmother. *Kachan* means mother in informal Japanese.
[8] LN: "our cat"

KT: Take up some short course to get a job. So I could get some money to go to school.

LN: In 1917 or 1918.

KT: 1918, somewhere around there.

LN: Because your uncle had just lost his money.

KT: He went to Tulsa. So I went to an automobile school. National Automobile School. So I graduated from the school. Then I looked for mechanical work. In the garages. Very greasy and dirty. I didn't want to go into that job because I'm not presentable. Always greasy. I gave up my mechanical work. I got to finish the school, but I didn't keep it up. I couldn't get enough money. So the only thing to do is to follow uncle to Oklahoma. There's no other way of me making a living to go to school. So I followed him to Tulsa – no I didn't go to Tulsa – I went to Water City, Oklahoma, where he had oil wells. Over there, then he had a small hotel and a gift shop. The gift shop was only this big – front of the living room area. He didn't pay me any wages. Income was the main worry of myself so that's when I got the job in Columbia and that was so hard so I changed to cotton picking job. That's how I came to go to Tulsa to Uncle's store. Uncle told me to go to Sand Spring Park where they have summer games, shops and games and so I had ping pong games there. Then I was a [indiscernible] customer. Anyway, I had a ping pong game for two seasons. Didn't make too much money. I think I did make some money maybe, but I didn't get any money.

LN: You were saying that you made $3 a week doing the –

KT: Lumber yard. I made quite a bit of money, not quite a bit of money, but not enough to get by.

LN: Where did you live?

KT: In Tulsa I went to Tulsa Business College – but without income it's not fun. Then meantime I happened to see a Japanese fellow who came from Chicago. And he worked for a family there, very rich, wealthy family by the name of Travis. I think the Travis Corporation is still in Tulsa. And he said, "Why don't you work in Travis Family when I'm working." He said I will make big money, I make as much as $75 to $100 a month there. That's wonderful, so I said, "Get me a job there. I'll work there for $75." So I went there and they liked me. Innocent boy. I worked for $75 for about six months, that didn't get me to school. The purpose was to go to school. See? I was farther and farther away from dental college. I should have stayed in Los Angeles, you know? Stayed as a schoolboy and make $3. I may get later on.

Anyways, to go to National Automobile School I was working for family too, schoolboy, and then I had $7 a week, there are many ways to make money. I made $3, then I got to $4, then I am making $7. But that my idea of making money was very, very poor. It very regimental and I could not make money.

LN: So when you made $75 a month –

KT: That was in Tulsa. So since I worked six, seven months, but I began to think, gee, this won't get me to anyplace near to dental college?

LN: You still wanted to go to dental school?

KT: Yeah, so I said as soon as I speak with Uncle I don't think I get to any place. So I was worrying what could be done. So that this friend of mine got me this job for $75 they build this school. "Come to Chicago. I am going there myself. They have lots of dental colleges

in Chicago. You don't have to stick to one job or one school." [Indiscernible.] So I followed him to Chicago.

LN: Driving? You drove? Did you drive there?

KT: No, no. There were no automobiles there. Very few automobiles. Travis had seven cars for himself. That was very unusual. But anyways, we took train from Tulsa to Chicago and in Chicago he said, "The best way is to get a schoolboy job. Tell them that you have experience in butler. You waited on tables in Tulsa, in Travis Family and you did very well so you can call yourself 'butler'." Looked for a job as a butler. I got a job in a family, and I went to drive and I wait on table and everything in the house. In the morning I serve breakfast, wash dishes then go to school. I was going to art school then. I tried to see just how that would work out. Art school $20 a month and I was getting $7 a week there. And with driving and waiting on table. $7, every couple three months, I run out of money, so I asked the lady to loan me money she loaned me $5 or $6 each time I run short. So actually, the thing is $7 a week and I pay $20 for school so I only have $1 left. So I walk to school, quite distance, about 20, no 17 blocks.

LN: Where was the school? Do you remember where the school was?

KT: Yeah. Art Institute.

LN: Is that on Michigan?

KT: Yeah, on Michigan Boulevard.

LN: I went there. I went to the museum.

KT: Nice, nice school. Anyway, I go there for a while. Then this friend of mine –

LN: Same friend?

KT: Yeah, you know, you stay in this school no matter how long you stay there, you're an artist and artist is a very poor business. You may make money sometimes, selling your painting, but you never can tell when you will sell your pictures. So he said, "Come along, I'll show you what artists do." So Sunday, I went to Central Park on Michigan Boulevard near Art Institute.[9]

[Break in audio]

KT: Then $7 a week job and paying $20 a month for school wasn't very encouraging so went to see art exhibit and those guys sitting there with long hair and raincoat and a few paintings in the street and nobody was selling. I asked a couple of fellows, "Are you making money?" Never make money. You sell it, sure you have a few dollars in your pocket for a couple days. You can never tell where the next money will come from. My friend said, "You know what? I'm starting in Chicago Commercial Art School." He said, "There is more money in commercial art than fine art." So I went to Commercial Art School and stayed there for the longest time, a year I think, was doing fine, in pen and ink drawings, but it was very hard on the eyes. Then –

LN: How did you get to the Harding?

KT: That's funniest thing there. In art school I got tired of it because pen and ink every day and you never know when the [indiscernible] money is coming in. I stayed about three years. "After you graduate. We'll get you a job." And three years of doing this.

LN: And were you working also?

[9] LN: "Grant Park"

KT: Yeah, and I was getting $7 a week. And then all of a sudden, this earthquake in Japan destroyed everything my father and family had.[10] Money, and house, and everything. The only thing I could do was send them money to make a living. So those days, if I sent them about $25 a month, they could live with one maid in a small, neat house.

LN: You were sending money to your mom?

KT: Yeah, about $25 or $22 or something around there, I would send every month. So I had to work. Then one of my friends said there's a job in Harding's museum, just starting. He hadn't gotten anything yet but he's going to hire for their museum. They're building, so I went there and talked to secretary, and she was very happy to have me there. So I got a job there as a helper to the man who was taking care of the, I helped him for about a year, about a year. He was heavy drinker, and he was gambler, he went to Chinese gambling all the time and come back drunk.

LN: And what was his name?

KT: Higa, Japanese name. Then once in a while, I find him lying in the antique exhibit, you know, lying there in the exhibit hall, so I told him that someday, why you are going to lose your job and might do some damage to the place. If they find you come back drunk like that it's not so good. "Ah," he said, "this job is kind of trying too. Cause there's no fun," he said, "Sure there's lots of fun in museums. You are working on making exhibit, putting the man on the horseback and show how [indiscernible], you know? How they lived." But anyways, he wasn't very happy. Then one day we were called to the office, said, "I think we need to let you fellows go. We are going to close the place for a while until the museum

[10] The Great Kantō earthquake struck the Kantō Plain on the main Japanese island of Honshū on Saturday, September 1, 1923. Varied accounts indicate the duration of the earthquake was between four and ten minutes. Extensive firestorms and even a fire whirl added to the death toll of over 100,000.

is more complete." But that was just a made up story. They had a couple of other people hired already and was three women helped them, about five, six people working there and we were fired, so now we were out of a job again. But I had to send money to Japan. Anyway, so the only way I can do it is to find a way to make some money, so I went to Coyne Institute of Radio, Coyne Radio School. I studied radio, and television was very new and very terrible machine. I work on television too. They had perforation on black plate and through this perforation it gives different shade of pictures, but anyways, but that's how primitive television was then, but radio part was good I enjoyed it. So I started television, radio shop in Chicago but this guy I hired as the manager cheated me all of the money there. Yeah.

LN: Did you know Grandma then?

KT: No. Business went busted. We had to close up the place. The secretary I had, Mrs. Vanderpool [phonetic], I think. She was a bookkeeper, old lady. She said, "You know Bill? You are dishing out the money and this fellow that you have, manager, is no good. He spend money on women, and doesn't go out the business, so you better quit, you are much better off if you quit right away." So I did quit in a couple weeks' time. Beautiful store I had.

LN: Where was that located?

KT: In Chicago on Halsted Street. I don't even know the numbers now.

LN: But where is that near? Do you know?

KT: No, I don't even remember now. Anyway, that's how my life was – and then I had to make money to send to Japan and at the end of the year I get the letter from my father. "I am

awful sorry to report this, but I borrow this much from so and so and borrow this much from so and so and I owe about $500."

LN: That's a lot right now.

KT: So I said to myself, gee, sending money every month $25, is not too good. So I wrote a letter to them.

LN: I think we are going to go shopping right now, but I'll come back. I'll be back about 9:30.

KT: Ok. I'll be here.

[Tape 1, Side B; 1/3/90]

LN: People borrowed money from him and things like that.

KT: All died or disappeared. Tokyo was just black. No heart [phonetic] in Tokyo. After the earthquake. 1924. That's the biggest and most tragical earthquake they ever had. Almost, I forgot how much, tens of thousands of people got killed. Anyway, now I had to send the money each month. At the year's end he wrote that he owed about 500, not $500, but 500 yen, here and there, all over. They had to borrow money because the money comes at the end of the month then they hear that the money is coming from America. So they vowed [phonetic] here and there and two years I had to send a chunk of money to pay off the debt that he makes. So I thought that maybe this is not going to be alright. So I said, I wrote him, "I'll send you $15 every month, I mean every week. I still send you a chunk of money at the end of the month." So $15 every week I had to send to them. Now I gave up all the thought of going back to school or anything. All I thought of was money to send to Japan. I kept this up for oh, 14 years I think. Thirteen, 14 years, every week. There was one time that I missed. The money didn't go to him so I wrote, "Money must be there, I never missed one week." And in Chicago they have snow, had one foot or more snow on the ground, and

I didn't have car or anything so I just had to take streetcar and walk over to main post office. So the people in the main post office got to know me.

LN: After 14 years.

KT: Yeah, man said, "You know you don't have to come on a day like this all heavy and cold and snow on the ground. You don't have to come. You just call us and one of us will send the money for you." "It's very nice of you but I just have to come and it got to be habit." That one time I missed and I didn't know for the longest time what happened. Anyway –

LN: Would you send them cash in the mail or would you send them a check, you know?

KT: No, a money order. So that way he get money every week so he don't have to go around and borrow money.

LN: What about your sisters? Were they in Japan too?

KT: My sisters were going to school. They were still young. And then all was going well and when Father passed away.

LN: What happened? How did he pass away?

KT: He has stomach trouble. Ulcer or something. I suspect cancer because the way he suffered. Anyways, they say he had ulcer and he just passed away. So Mother went to my sister's home. He was dentist and she was able to take care of her and she could help them.

LN: The sister that came here before?

KT: That's the only sister I have living now. She's 82 or something.

LN: Yeah, I met her, a long time ago, I met her.

KT: She's still living. Anyway, that's how it ended my ambition to go to school. I just had to work and send the money. So by the time I got through this obligation of sending money

I was too old to go back to school. I never even thought about it. Then, in the museum, I was doing well. And people liked me.

LN: So you went back to the museum?

KT: I was in the museum.

LN: Ok, 'cause you said something about how they let you go?

KT: Oh yes, yes, that's right. That was after I got in the museum for about a few years they decided to let us go.

LN: But then they brought you back?

KT: Yeah, then they searched all over for me.

LN: Oh really?

KT: Later I found out that they wanted to get rid of the man who was before me. He was a very nice, honest man but he drank so much, and his behavior was getting terrible. So instead of saying you are fired but we will keep Bill, they – and I wouldn't stay either because he was nice to me so I told them that if you have to let him go I have to quit at the same time. So both of us go. That's when I went to Coyne Radio.

LN: You told me that, and then they searched all over for you and you came back?

KT: Yeah, then I was there for longest time. After I graduated I stayed there for about six months. In the meantime they were looking all over for me and finally they found me there. They just begged me to come back so I was back all by myself. Now this time they had many helpers for me. An electrician, plumbers, and all those people came around regularly and I got everything I need. They built a nice workshop for me in part of the museum. I have the picture of it.

LN: Yeah, I brought some of these things over here. Some of the books and then I saw one of you in the newspaper. Newspaper articles with you fixing things and stuff like that. So you met a lot of interesting people there, right?

KT: Many, many people, President of the United States.

LN: Which president did you meet?

KT: President Hoover.

LN: And did you meet Al Capone also?

KT: He came over. He said he has a small collection of his own in the Stanford University and said for me to stop by when you go down there that way. I went to see his museum in Stanford University. There were few pieces, articles that weren't quite 100% authentic. Anyway, it's nice collection he had.

LN: Didn't you take Grandma with you?

KT: No. You didn't go to Stanford, no? We weren't married then.

LN: Grandma do you recognize people in that?

CT: Yes. There's a few that I don't know.

KT: So that's when I got married, you see? I came over here to see Stanford University and all those places and I met her in Los Angeles. So we just got married without any previous acquaintances. I thought she was nice.

LN: Pretty, huh?

KT: My uncle-in-law suggested that I get married. Anyways, that's when I got married. I was 36.

LN: Right in 1936.

KT: I was getting pretty old then. And that's how it happened. That's how I got stuck in the museum too. I asked for a raise so many times and Harding said, "By jove, you know you're paying him as much as some of these doctors are getting in the hospital." Sure enough I had a dentist he was getting $50 a week. That was big wages back then. They paid me $50 a week. Harding said, "By golly, you know Bill, we are paying you as much as some of these doctors get." Well I know that but I just have to because I'm in need of money and I got to have so much to send home and I have got to have some for myself. "That's ok, you save all the money and put all your money in Illinois Central Railroad, IC Train Company. By the time you get to retire you will have plenty of money saved up. And you don't have to worry about money at all," he said. Well, sounds alright, but I hope I have more money to retire.

LN: Were you saving money also?

KT: Yeah.

LN: Did you send it to your mom?

KT: No, I sent money once in a while. Harding said, "You know Bill? I'll give you all I got for exchange of what you have." "What do you mean I have? I don't have anything." "Yes you have. You have your youth. You give me your youth and I will give you everything I got and money and land and everything."

LN: How old was he?

KT: He was about 60.

CT: And Dachi was 36.[11]

[11] Dachi is short for friend in Japanese. The Tsuchiya Family use it to refer to Kiyotsugu Tsuchiya.

KT: Yeah and, "Don't worry about money. That will come to you. Don't worry about it." So, well. "I may get married very soon." "Get married? What? By jove, you don't want to get married. Any damn fool can get married at any time. But don't be fooled. You wait until you have enough money and you have enough to retire." I just smiled. Anyways, that's how it ended – and we got married in Los Angeles. That's when all this trouble started, all kinds.

LN: War.

KT: Worries, and money, and worries for the future, and worries for family, and so on. Then Harding died all of the sudden.

LN: That was the same year?

KT: That was 1940, 1939.

LN: So what did you do when you worked over here? Didn't you have a nursery?

KT: Then. I stayed in the museum. There was a guest room in the museum.

LN: I thought that Grandma went to Chicago too.

KT: Yeah, we were living in the part of the museum there. Beautiful place. French furniture and velvet walls and the floors all stick.

CT: I wonder if they have that museum.

KT: No, no. They destroyed all of it.

CT: She wants to go see the museum.

LN: Yeah, 'cause I was in Chicago. Auntie said that it was still there but it had another name.

KT: Yeah, I think so. Anyway. The end was very sad.

LN: So what happened?

KT: So we came back to Los Angeles because the war was brewing and public was very favorable to Japanese.[12] I decided to come to Los Angeles and start something or go to – no. I had offer to go to Manchuria Railroad Museum. They were starting museum in Peking, China. Manchuria Museum. Japan had control of all Manchurian states in China and they built this Manchuria into most modern country. They had good schools built and railroad and everything. And they were going to build a museum, keep the custom of Manchuria and work here among the Japanese. You feel more at home. So I came as far as Los Angeles. Los Angeles I ask the people in immigration office. Well I think you are silly to go back to Japan now the war is starting. If you go back to Manchuria now your children going to lose all the citizenship so –

LN: Was Auntie born yet?

KT: She was. Katie was, but Fumi wasn't.[13] Fumi was born in camp. He said, "Well whatever Manchuria might have, you are going to lose your citizenship of your children." So he said, "I suggest that you stay a little longer to see how the situation is going to be." But he knew there's going to be war. So I was waiting for a while. Then meantime, man said, her friend, old man, said, "Start something, some kind of business so you can make a living here." So we rented a place which belonged to my cousin in Culver City. Big place, beautiful Japanese garden there. They had a pond as big as this house, maybe bigger. Bridges and waterfall. Eight-foot waterfall. You could turn the water on and the water goes down, beautiful place.

LN: So did you have a car by then? To get over to Culver City?

[12] LN: Possibly intended to say "un-favorable."
[13] Katie is Kieko Tsuchiya

KT: Well, yeah, I had a car. Old car. Model A Ford, and so I decide to start a nursery there. I didn't know anything about planting.

LN: Oh you didn't? Wow I always know you as knowing everything about it.

KT: So I bought encyclopedia, botany and every night I read about it. And one day at the nursery a lady came and said, "Don't you carry bedding plants?" Bedding Plants? What kind of thing is that? Well, carnations, marigolds.

CT: He didn't know what bedding plant was when he started.

KT: So I say maybe tomorrow or day after I will have them, so that evening I went over to my cousin's place and, "What's a bedding plant?" They laughed. Nursery man don't know what a bedding plant is.

Anyways, they told me where to get it, so I went to get bedding plants about – few boxes – everyone seemed to like me. I was more friendly than other businessman. We had Bandini come around, "You want the refrigerator in there? Well, do they sell? Is it a good seller?" "Oh sure, they are the best seller in the market now. You have to have refrigerator," so I had Bandini bring a refrigerator. On the front of the store. Those days Bandini has those steer manure things in burlap, potato burlap sacks that's what they used, potato sacks. Put all the steer manure in there piled up. Three, four days later, they start smelling and smoke come out, it get hot you know and all the sacks burn out and they scatter all over the place. Anyways, that's how Bandini started and that's how we started. We used the manure come round from the burned-out sacks for refrigerators.

Then some people come around and, "Do you know how to start lawn landscaping?" "Oh sure I know. Why?" So once I had contractors, a man, make landscaping. I planted the flowers and trees on the front but now I had in the nursery – bougainvillea grown only about that tall – and had beautiful flowers, red and purple flowers back in the garden I put. He said, "I want berry plant, berry like Christmas trees." So I got some holly, berry plant, and all that was very nice. And all this, and bush rose. Everything looked fine and he paid a lot of money for it, then 'bout three, four months, about six months later this man came, "Bill, you know there's something wrong with my yard. I want you to come over and see it." "What is wrong?" It's dying." "Oh no. It's not dying, it's growing but it doesn't look just right so you come over and take a look and see what you think about it." Well I went over and all the plants I plant in the back with flowers on were still the same size. Blooming beautiful, but then the bougainvillea and all those things I didn't know they were vines, planted on the front, they grow so tall, they growing up the roof and I discuss some things and they were all covered up with vines so I had too many plants.

CT: This is my graduation.

LN: There's your diploma in there too.

CT: Oh, is it? Graduate from Lincoln High School.

LN: Your high school diploma's right here.

KT: So my landscaping was not so good because I didn't know the plants. How big they get or whether they grow sideways or upright or anything. But I got by though. I put the lawn in, I hired a gardener on the street, Japanese gardener. He said he'll help me, so I hired him. We put the lawn in, and prepared these things around, it was very nice. Then one day

I went to water this lawn that we put in and she was looking for me. She sent man out to –

LN: Grandma?

KT: Yeah, she said that war started between Japan and America.

LN: That was about your anniversary, huh?

KT: Yeah. So I couldn't believe myself, but anyway, the customers I met didn't even know. I think they saw in newspaper next day. They came back and began to figure what could be done with the nursery. There was a milkman, used to bring the milk for Katie, baby. "What are you going to do? There's going to be war." "I know that. I don't know." I had to sell my stuff.

LN: Did you know right then that you had to sell it or did you soon find out?

KT: Put the sign up and sale, sell. Sold quite a bit. I went to West Los Angeles and to some Japanese nurseries and they bought as much as I can, plant brought back and had sale.[14] Sold pretty good. But then we had to evacuate, notice came that we had to evacuate so and so date and choose our destination whether to go to Arizona or California.

LN: You got to choose?

KT: Yeah.

CT: We could choose several different places.

KT: We could go to Manzanar, or Heart Mountain or any of those places. Then we had a customer, old man, said, "Bill you people have to evacuate, to one of the camps, but don't go to any of these Heart Mountain, other Arizona area, you go up to Manzanar, it's in Northern California. That's about the best place you can go. So go there." He told me. He

[14] LN: 6 month

was an FBI man; he knew what it was going on. That man told me Manzanar is the place to go. So we decided to go to Manzanar that was – so that milkman has to bring the milk every morning. "You want to keep up this nursery? Oh, I am crazy for it. Your place looks real nice." "You want to buy it?" "I don't have that kind of money." "How much have you got?" "Well all the money I've got is about $50 in my pocket, maybe $75." So I said, "I'll give it to you for $75 and I'll sell you everything I got here." So –

LN: For the whole nursey?

KT: Everything there. We gathered up our stuff.

LN: And how much was it worth?

KT: I don't know. I spent about a year or more, built up. I think the place, worth three, nowadays, maybe worth about $100,000. Pond, goldfish.

LN: But did you think that that was a good deal back then or did you really, you just didn't care.

KT: Didn't belong to me, the land I just was renting. Then one day I had to go no matter what was there or not, everyone was just throwing their things away, you know? We were allowed to carry, only enough to carry ourselves.

LN: Only what you could carry? Yeah.

KT: I bought this great, big sack and carried on my shoulder like this. Clothing and shoes, and what not.

LN: And Auntie couldn't carry too much.

KT: No she just carried suitcase. We went to Manzanar. That was sad, huh?

CT: Yeah.

LN: So you went and –

KT: Went to Manzanar. Stayed in the line, they gave us a blanket and a pillow and –

CT: Couch.

KT: And mattress. They said they will send it out. So we went to barrack that we were supposed to live in, then there comes the mattress. Big sack filled with straws. We had to put that on the cot, cot bed and we took the blanket they gave us over us. That's how we lived for a long time. They had coal stove there and that was oil huh? Oil stove?

LN: Oil stove.

[Tape 2, Side A; 1/1/90 – no audio remains]

CT: People on a bench, people –

KT: Did you read the book, Manzanar?

LN: Yeah, I did.

KT: Well that's the way they kept –

LN: So did you work there?

KT: Well everyone got $16, see? Except the professionals, doctors, and $18, $2 difference. Anyway, the Manzanar office noticed that I was in museum for so many years, so Dr. Carter who was the head of education, she came she said, "Mr. Tsuchiya we want to start small museum.[15] We might call it the Visual Education Museum. I get all the material you need." And with any kind of small museum, well that's how we started the Manzanar Visual Education Museum. She gave me half dozen magazines, monthly, old magazines, you cut out all the pictures that you might need to supply to the schools, children want to know what a drug store is or what a grocery store is, so you cut out these clippings and paste up the piece of paper and file them, make the files that they gave us, so many files to

[15] Dr. Genevieve W. Carter was the Superintendent of Education in at Manzanar War Relocation Center during World War II.

put the pictures in, so that's how we started. Two scissors and about three, four magazines, we start the museum, that's how we started.

LN: So was it busy in there? I mean, did a lot of people go to look?

KT: Yeah. Well gradually we had an artist, we had people help us, carpenter and so on. We build a visual [indiscernible] in the center of the room, to display pictures, and figure ways of plants, unusual plants of desert and we found Indian waterstone, and Indian arrowheads and things, we'd display those things.

LN: You found those at Manzanar?

KT: Yeah.

LN: Oh.

KT: And Indian waterstone like this, big. We had pretty good display of a lot of things. Collected about 300 different insets and butterflies. And every time I go out would get a net, big net to catch butterflies, and it's amazing, you know. We had about 300 different species. We would kill them, peel them onto paper and display them and we had sagebrushes and things we displayed, and minerals and rocks that we found around the camp. Camp was surrounded by barbed wire and –

LN: Weren't there watch guards?

KT: Yeah. Watch guards were everywhere and we couldn't go out. But we had permission to go out of the gate in search for the materials for the museum. So they gave us a truck, not exactly truck, but jeep-like thing. We went around gathering different kinds of plants and rocks and things and [indiscernible] gold mines, [indiscernible] range they were some nice. Gave us a couple of nugget, gold nugget.

LN: So did you go out by yourself or you went with other people?

KT: No, I had a man, very good friend who was helping me. Mr. Toyo, Toyo Miyatake, had a very famous photographic studio in Los Angeles.[16] The Toyo Studio is still there in Los Angeles. His sons are carrying on.[17] Their father, Toyo was good friend of mine. We got to be very good friends in camp. We went out together and we found deer horn, I think that the deer shed their horn every year, we found them in the bushes, brought them back and displayed them and being with local Indians, we had display. We had very good collection, but then later, after many years, I heard by rumor that all the collection that remained there went to museum in Inyo County.

LN: Where's that?

KT: It's up around, what was that town we went?

LN: Was there a camp there also?

KT: No.

CT: Camp was only Manzanar.

KT: Inyo City, I think, no?

LN: You heard that rumor.

KT: Independence. The Independence City. Independence has a museum there.[18] I heard that all the pieces collected in the camp went to Inyo, Independence.

LN: After the war?

KT: Yeah. Went there a few years ago. They did have a few things left there from the camp, Manzanar.

[16] Toyo Miyatake (1895-1979) was the photographer and leading figure in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo arts community who became the official photographer of the concentration camp at Manzanar. Sharon Yamato. "Toyo Miyatake," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Toyo%20Miyatake (accessed Jan 20 2024).
[17] For more on Atsufumi Archie Miyatake (Toyo's oldest son) see Manzanar Oral History interview MANZ-1007. He ran Toyo Miyatake Studios until handing it off to his son Alan.
[18] The Eastern California Museum in Independence is the Inyo County museum and holds many Manzanar items.

LN: When you went with Auntie and Jeff and everybody.

KT: Yeah, yeah. [Indiscernible] camp. Small section but one side – it's still there, but nothing like what we had.

LN: So how long did you work at the museum?

KT: Ha. About two, three years, no?

CT: Two, three years.

LN: So you worked there and then did you leave?

KT: And then we left there. We went to – I went to teach Japanese language. First, they offered me – Mr. Merritt was the director of Manzanar Camp – called me in the office.[19] He said, "Mr. Tsuchiya I have job for you. Everybody has to go out sooner or later and have to work, so we have a job for you if you care." "What kind of job is that?" Well this is in South Sea and you take broadcast from Japanese Army in Japanese and translate it into English.

LN: Was that the trials?

KT: No, No. It's a war.

LN: War trials then?

KT: No, fighting. Japanese Army [indiscernible] American Army [indiscernible] fighting each other. But they have intercom, talk to each other, advance or retreat, or move this battalion to so and so area, and so forth. They listen to that. They need someone to take those –

LN: Translate.

[19] Businessman and educator, Ralph Merritt was the director of the Manzanar concentration camp from November 1942 until its closing three years later. Brian Niiya. "Ralph Merritt," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Ralph%20Merritt (accessed Jan 20 2024).

KT: Yeah. That's the kind of job I was offered. [Indiscernible] know what [indiscernible] go into this war, neither side is – war between mother and father and I don't want to decide either one. Both are just dear to me. So if it is peaceful I'll go any time. So a month or so later Mr. Merritt called me in again and said, "Mr. Tsuchiya you want to go teach Japanese language at University of Colorado." I said, "Well that sounds alright, so I'll go." So I went there.

LN: Where in Colorado?

KT: Umm.

LN: Boulder?

KT: Boulder, yeah. That's where the University of Colorado. I was teaching there about a month or two, then they started another school in Oklahoma, navy. Naval Intelligence Training, so they transferred me to Oklahoma. Stillwater, Oklahoma and I was teaching there for quite many months, maybe a year.

LN: And that's when they –

KT: Then the war ended. Now they told me to go to Pentagon building in Washington and apply for the job for Japan. So they gave me, interviewed me, far back as 20 years, checked on me, what I was doing so and so year and what I did there and what I did there.

LN: They investigated your background.

KT: So they sent me to Japan for GHQ in Tokyo.[20] I was still enemy alien then, you know? I had trouble here and there. Anyway.

LN: Do you want me to stop real quick?

[Break in audio]

[20] GHQ stood for General Headquarters in the Allied Occupation of Japan after WWII.

LN: The end of your life in America?

KT: Not the end of your life in America.

LN: Well, so you went to Washington, D.C.

KT: Pentagon in Washington and go the job in Japan. GHQ. Then I was translating there for two to three years.

LN: Translating. What were you – for who?

KT: Translating the [indiscernible] record of the activities of Japanese Army in the South Sea and everywhere.

LN: During the war.

KT: Yeah, and confession by –

LN: Was that interesting?

KT: Yeah. Very interesting, sad stories. We had to be very careful because any slight mistake means their life to them. They could be out in prison or maybe to foreign exclusions, but Japanese language is so ambiguous you don't know whether it is yes or no. Most ambiguous language there is. That was probably because of the [indiscernible] if you made a slight mistake in statement they get their head chopped off in the olden days. So they were very careful in making statement of any kind.

LN: Well what kinds of things would you talk – would you ask them questions or would you just translate?

KT: We translated all the letters and statements. The statements were printed and were sent to us. We had to translate to English. All the statements came in Japanese. We went to war tribunal where they were [indiscernible] the cabinet members. I went to court every day for about – months and I was free to go or not go. Then after about three years they went

to [indiscernible] someone in department in war trials. War tribunal was over in three years.

LN: So in about 1948.

KT: Yeah. That is when they began to discharge all of us. That's why –

LN: How many other people did that with you?

KT: Oh, there were – I met so many students in Stillwater, Oklahoma, navy school where I was teaching and I met many students. Some were as higher ranked as captain, navy. I met many of them in Tokyo. This captain that I was teaching in Stillwater I met in old bookshop. I saw him look at me. I walked over and talked with him. He was so surprised to see me there.

LN: So where did you live when you did the war trials?

KT: They gave us room in [indiscernible] had about five story building there. They left without bombing. They left few of these buildings for occupation forces use. So this was one of those building left. Tokyo was completely destroyed. Flat. Up from the fifth floor at [indiscernible] you could see nothing but black charred brown all over the place. I stood there for a while, then I stayed at War Ministry Department. And they had big brown and part of [indiscernible] for war tribunal. That's, I would go there every day. See the trials going on. I stayed there for a half a year, I guess.

LN: So did you get to see your relatives when you were there?

KT: Then after a year or so, I got permission to call my family. So I took ship to go back to Richmond where they lived for a while. It's a navy village. Navy housing for their use but I was intending on going back there and bring my family back. Then about a week after I got on the ship my whole body began to swell up – my face was like this. So I went to

doctor's office. I said, "Doctor, I think there's something wrong with me – I am getting swollen all over." "How bad is it?" "Well can't you see my face is swollen up like this?" "Well I don't know because I didn't know you before this." Put you in test, so he took me to isolation. Get more – kidney trouble. I kept having kidney trouble, so they put me in isolation in army transport.

LN: So had you already been to Richmond yet?

KT: Yeah, they sent me back to Seattle and sent me to navy, naval hospital. Naval hospital checked my record, he doesn't belong to us anymore. He belongs to army because I was, when I go to Pentagon they assigned me army job. Up til then I was navy. So they had to transfer me to army hospital again in Seattle up above the hill. I forgot the name of the hospital there, army hospital. That's where I was confined for – oh, longest of, about three months I guess.

LN: And you were waiting Grandma?

CT: In Richmond.

LN: What were you doing then? Were you working?

CT: Seattle.

LN: By yourself?

KT: Months after I got there I was more settled. I went out to see my family if I could find my family. Found my family. Doctor [indiscernible] my youngest sister's husband, I got off at Tokyo Municipal Train to this town they were in and I had taxi picture and went to their home. My sister came out to the front. "My name is Tsychiya. I came to see if my mother was here." She was so surprised to see her brother in 35 years. I think.

LN: So after Seattle you went to Japan.

KT: Yes, that was the first time I was back. I heard her running into the back. "Mother, mother," she said in Japanese. "Brother is here." "Oh don't make that kind of joke," she said. "I know he won't come here." Well anyways, that's how I met my mother still living.

LN: So you stayed there?

KT: I stayed there quite often. I helped them out.

CT: Continental Hotel in Downtown Tokyo.

LN: Continental Hotel in Downtown Tokyo.

KT: I helped them rebuild their dental office and house to live in and I visited there quite often. That house was built for 500,000 yen. Nowadays, why it takes maybe 1,000 times more, but they have nicer land in part of Tokyo, and built a house and office there, dental office. They still had great big land behind there. They said they are keeping that part for me to come back and build a house.

LN: So then did Grandma, and my mom, and Katie go to Japan? Is that when they went? Yeah, I remember hearing about that.

KT: That's my whole life.

LN: So you came back to, all together you came back. And then when did you open your frame shop?

KT: Oh that's way after.

LN: So what did you do when you came back?

KT: When we came back I didn't know any kind of business or job. I never did anything else except museum work. So I did gardening. Next door where we rented house was a young *Nisei* boy; two brothers – three brothers, two brothers were gardening.[21] "So how is the

[21] Nisei is the term for the children of Japanese immigrants, originating from the Japanese language term for "second generation." In the American context, the term is generally understood to apply specifically to the

gardening?" "Oh, it's a very good job and we like it. You don't work for anybody except for yourself." It sounded good. "So can you teach me gardening?" "Oh sure, you come with me and you learn." There isn't much to learn. Mow the lawn, and plant flowers sometimes, nothing to it. So I followed him around I worked for him about a month I think, without any wages.

LN: Just to learn?

KT: And I started my own botanical Japanese gardener who is long experienced.

LN: That's the way you have to do it.

KT: Yeah, and I had quite many customers.

LN: And where did you live then?

KT: Living in East Los Angeles.

LN: Which street? I think I went there with my mom and Katie one time.

KT: Folsom. Folsom Street. Yeah, that was a long time ago. Now that story I tell you is as far back as 75 years so.

LN: So how long did you do the gardening before you did the frames?

KT: Oh I was gardening for about three years, no? In the meantime, I didn't want to be gardener all the time so I rented a place also [indiscernible] in, near Compton. Small land about half acre and I started my nursery there. And I didn't know too much about nurseries. I thought I knew after gardening a while. Then I ran the nursery about five years. I did gardening

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American-born—and thus U.S. citizen—children of Japanese immigrants who arrived prior to the cessation of Japanese immigration to the U.S. under the dictates of the Immigration Act of 1924. The bulk of Nisei were thus children or young adults during World War II. "Nisei" also implies being raised in the U.S. and speaking English as a first language, with a separate term—Kibei Nisei or just Kibei—applied to those who were born in the U.S. but mostly raised or educated in Japan.
Tsuchiya, born in Japan, was Issei or first generation.
"Nisei," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Nisei (accessed Jan 20 2024).

and [indiscernible] I went down there and made all kinds of arrangements and planted trees and flowers and that was a combination of my gardening and landscaping. Then after about five years her boss, Gold, wanted to buy a frame shop, a Filipino man wanted to sell his frame shop. His frame shop was very unusual because he makes [indiscernible] frames in different designs and he covered them in gold leaf.

LN: Like that?

KT: Yeah, well – it's more fancy. Flowers and things. That's a lost art. And it may be worthwhile learning. They say they want to sell the place so if you want to come in with me or be a partner.

LN: Oh, Mr. Gold said that?

KT: Yeah, so I sold out everything in my nursey. About $7,000 I think and put everything into this business.

LN: That kind of combined your museum, well maybe a little bit – did that kinda help? Art?

KT: But money making was something I never engaged in.

[Tape 2, Side B – no audio remains]

KT: Developed myself – enlarged many of these. I had a small camera, smaller than 35, this was the size of my camera. That's original size.

LN: Oh the pictures would be taken that small?

KT: Yeah, I enlarged them. I made the enlarger myself. And –

LN: Hmm – here's –

KT: These are all the pictures I had taken there.

LN: Of the art there? The things that –

KT: These are the [indiscernible] we had. Plenty of Italian, 15th century.

LN: So what is the name of the street you lived on in East LA?

CT: Folsom.

KT: I think they –

LN: Some of those pictures – we look similar, huh? That's what Auntie Michi was saying.

KT: All this armor, the horseback riders, you know, the knight, the knights from about 15th century to 16th centuries. In about 100 years' time they used this type of armor. Here we display a man getting knighted. That's from the – they are actual size of people.

LN: And where is this? Outside?

KT: Yeah, this is garden. They had in front of the castle. He was a chauffeur. He was Harding's chauffeur. This is one of the oldest armor. Fifteenth century. Gothic armor. This is a figure head from old battleship.

LN: Oh wow. And you restored these things, took care of them?

KT: Yeah, maintained. The old stairways. This was built by imported rocks from Italy called travertine. It's original travertine stones.

LN: Here are some more pictures here, they are real small though.

KT: Yeah.

LN: Is this the outside of it?

KT: Outside, that's right, that's outside.

LN: That's the castle? Wow.

KT: Castle. Well here's my work room

LN: Oh yeah. That's just like this, right?

KT: That's right. [Phone rings]

LN: I'll move the drink.

CT: Hello. Hi, Irene is at home. Oh we are just looking at old pictures. Uh huh. I don't know where Michelle found these.

KT: I remember when these were taken.

CT: Yes I'll have her put them away. Ok, ok. Bye, bye.

LN: Who was that?

CT: Katie, she wanted to know where Irene was. She said what are you doing? I said looking at picture albums. Where'd you get that? I don't know. Michelle found them. Well you better have her put them away where she found them.

LN: I will, I will.

KT: This is my desk in my office.

LN: Is this when Hoover came to visit you? Is this when President Hoover came?

KT: When?

LN: Do you have pictures of that?

KT: No I don't think so, maybe newspaper.

LN: Oh.

KT: This is very interesting. The room. This is the music room. Musical instruments. They had all the way from clavichord, harpsichord, and pipe organ, pianos. Very interesting. He had a harp collection too. See that little armor standing there by the stairway?

LN: Yeah.

KT: That was given by Queen Victoria of England to her grandson Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany.

LN: Oh wow. And how did they get those things in the museum?

KT: Oh, he bought them, he bought in auction.

LN: Grandma – were you ever a bridesmaid?

CT: Bridesmaid? For a wedding? Yeah.

LN: Because I can see you in here. It looks like you were.

CT: I was in two weddings.

LN: Who is this? You?

CT: This is my girlfriend who went to live in Texas.

LN: What is her name?

CT: Sada [phonetic].

LN: And you are also over here – there – there are a lot of your friends.

KT: Dr. Walker

LN: Dr. Walker?

KT: He was one of my best friends in Chicago.

CT: I think I am going to have you take those three pictures down.

LN: And do what?

CT: If you could find that big bag.

LN: Oh these three? Yeah, some people are taking their decorations down.

CT: Over there by the – see if you can find –

LN: It even has the Christmas lights on it. I'll have Irene put them away.

CT: No don't have Irene. Put it on – leave it there.

LN: The last time you went to visit me was I think about two and a half years ago. It was April, May and, April I mean, March and April. So you are going to get better?

CT: I enjoyed that boat ride.

LN: Yeah, the boat. You can go on out on the river and we can take you out. So try to get Grandpa to – try to keep on exercising and then you will be strong enough to go.

CT: Yeah. We'll go, end of April or beginning of May.

LN: Yeah, that was two and a half years ago. And then maybe one day we can all go to Japan, right? Remember.

CT: Yeah. I'd like to take both you girls and Jeff.

LN: Yeah, we always wanted to go with you.

CT: Disneyland in Florida.

LN: Oh yeah, I've never been there.

CT: I've never been there either.

LN: But maybe we could do that before we go to Japan right?

CT: I hope so.

LN: We'll, you'll get – do you want me to move this down. Is that good enough? Do you want to take a nap now?

CT: No.

LN: So if you come and visit us then we can take you all over.

CT: Us where?

LN: Me in Texas.

CT: Ok.

LN: So just keep doing your exercises. And eating.

CT: Yes ma'am.

LN: You are doing great compared to when I came in May. When you had just hurt yourself.

CT: Oh that was awful.

LN: You couldn't even walk then.

CT: In '87?

LN: In – last year in, right before – in May. You left the hospital in June. So you are doing great now. I've seen a great improvement because you couldn't walk. After your hip. Remember?

CT: Yeah. [Indiscernible].

LN: Does that hurt?

CT: Doesn't hurt. Sometimes it's itchy

LN: Tingly? Well no more of that, right? You have to be careful when you walk so you don't fall. Get stronger. Those exercises help. And that walker is really good too. It gets really you around. Pretty soon you'll have to be cooking that dinner again, right?

CT: Oh dear.

LN: My mom needs your help.

CT: She can do it all by herself. The first night –

LN: Yeah, she can do a really good job. I think Grandpa is making some coffee.

CT: Oh he likes that coffee. Ever since – oh I want you to – I don't like that coffee. It's so strong. About two or three days –

LN: Oh. What did you make? Apples?

KT: Uh huh [affirmative].

LN: Do you want me to break one in half? Ok. I'll have the other half. These are great.

CT: It's very good.

LN: How is your persimmon? Do you still have persimmon?

KT: No. Tangerine is the only thing.

LN: How did you like your book? Your book?

KT: Looking into crusade books.

LN: It's a good that you did that and put that book together. Did you read it all? No? Do you want me to read the English to you?

KT: Yeah.

LN: Yeah?

CT: He's hard of hearing. You really need to shout into his ear. Do you like persimmon?

LN: I never tried it until I was here, but I like it.

CT: How about the little orange?

LN: Tangerine?

CT: Tangerine? You like it? You want to take a few home?

LN: I don't think I can fit anything else. I am kinda over, overpacked because it was full when I came but now it's fuller.

CT: When you – that much?

LN: Maybe, I'll see. What is that little girl?

CT: Take it to –

LN: Andrea?[22]

CT: Andrea, I don't know if she likes it or not.

LN: I don't know if she likes that.

KT: [Indiscernible].

LN: Sure, Grandma you want some?

CT: Thank you.

LN: You're welcome. Did you get your coffee?

KT: I'm having some.

[22] LN: my half-sister

LN: Ok, good.

CT: I wonder who is going to take you home.

LN: If Jeff doesn't call pretty soon, I'll call him.

CT: You know Jeff's number?

LN: Yeah, I think I do. Is it written down?

CT: Not at my place.

LN: Well Auntie's is and I can call her at work. Then she said she'd stop by here after work. She makes you dinner a lot?

CT: Just the dinner part. She brings about three times, 12:30, 1:00, or 1:30 she makes dinner. We eat around 5:30 then the way she goes shopping to Market Basket. That's right. That's warmer.

LN: Warmer, two layers?

CT: She goes to Market Basket to go shopping and then she comes here.

LN: Oh.

CT: I haven't seen Jeff for such a long time.

LN: Yeah, well he came here two days ago.

CT: Yeah, that's the first time he came since I got back from the hospital.

LN: Oh really. He has a really busy job it sounds like.

CT: He doesn't go to school.

LN: He told us about it last night. Sounds –

CT: Oh, what did he say?

LN: Oh, about his job. He works all – ridiculous hours.

CT: Yeah, work, work, work.

LN: Sounds like he likes it though.

CT: Well I would like it better if he goes to school and at least graduate. That one semester of 12th grade. Have him do that and –

LN: I remember you went to my graduation.

CT: Oh yeah.

LN: And Alyssa's.

CT: And I wanted to go so much to St. Mary's graduation but that time I was sick.

LN: I know, well I came here and that was ok.

CT: Is your school now still St. Mary's?

LN: Uh huh. I'm just going to graduate school now so it's a lot harder. College is a lot harder than high school and graduate school is a lot harder than college. I'm trying. Do you want some more apple?

CT: No thanks. I want my cup instead of apple.

LN: Your tea?

CT: I mean tea.

[Tape 3, Side A; January 1, 1990]

LN: Whenever you feel you want to, you know, do it. 'Cause I did it with Toddy the other day and it was really neat. She was –

CT: Toddy.

LN: My dad's mom.

CT: Oh yes, yes.

LN: Yeah, so she's doing pretty good, but she just got in a car accident.

CT: Again?

LN: No, I mean somebody hit her.

CT: Hit her car.

LN: Yeah, hit her car, so she has a back problem now kinda and then she had a little bit of a cold but she asked about you. See how you are doing.

CT: I haven't sent her a card or anything.

LN: You got my other cards though, right?

CT: Oh yes, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Then I got two cards from you just a couple of days ago.

LN: Oh good.

CT: Yeah, you are always the first one that I get a card from.

LN: Oh. And how is Auntie Michi?

CT: Oh Auntie Michi's alright. Uncle Nori is getting worse and worse. He is very hard of hearing. Just like Dachi here. Can't hear very good. You've got to really shout at him. That same with Uncle Nori too. He comes here and everyone just brings a chair and leaves it right there. And he says, "Sit down, sit down. And you have a nice talk with Auntie." You know, with me. He just sits here a couple hours. Nobody wants to come and talk to him. Goodness. The last time was before Christmas – and he just sat there and asked the same question over and over because he can't hear.

LN: Oh.

CT: They came a little before eight.

LN: I'll sit up here with you. So they came –

CT: So they came a little before 8:00 that night and they stayed until 10, after 10. It was the same thing I have to yell at him.

LN: And how is Chiyo?

CT: Oh I haven't seen her. Ever since I came back from that American Hospital.

LN: Oh. Maybe I'll see her. I'll go to work with Auntie.

CT: Oh.

LN: To the Super Yarn.

CT: Uh huh. And you say hello to her. Tell her that I'll go the first week and maybe the second week in January. I've got to get a new calendar – big calendar like that.

LN: Yeah, it's already the first of January today so it's a new year.

CT: Yes and that one is, in fact yesterday was the 31st, so I have to have a new one.

LN: Let's see what's underneath that.

CT: It's the same month, I mean the same year.

LN: Oh yeah. Ok yeah. Well we can get –

CT: It's a little long one. You get me one and I'll pay you for it.

LN: Ok, I'll go do that tomorrow then.

CT: Any place. But there's – if you go straight this – Normandie then go straight down past Vons.

LN: Yeah, you took me there. There's a little stationery store?

CT: Yeah.

LN: Uh huh. I went there with you. Like about two years ago.

CT: Oh.

LN: That's how I know where it is.

CT: I think they sell stat – calendar like that. So I want that. So I can see from here.

LN: Uh huh. That's good Grandma.

CT: Auntie got me a nice one to put in the center there. But it's so small that I can't see it.

LN: Oh yeah. Well that's good that you have good eyes.

CT: [Indiscernible]

LN: Yeah, they are. Those are cute. Did Auntie bring those?

CT: Yeah, she put it up. We got to have her get me a calendar there.

LN: Did you hear I went to Chicago with Andy?

CT: Oh. When did you go?

LN: When I went to Milwaukee I went to Chicago.

CT: Oh.

LN: So I was wondering where that museum was that Grandpa used to work. Do you remember the street?

CT: Thirty-two – 32 and there's two more number. It's Lakewood. Lake. Wood. Avenue.

LN: Lakewood Avenue is that downtown, do you know?

CT: No, it's a ways towards the Colored section.

LN: Hmm. Ok, ‘cause I wanted to go to see it ‘cause I've seen the old pictures Grandpa has of how beautiful it is, so I was just wondering.

CT: Oh, I hope they still have that place there.

LN: Yeah, he said that they might so maybe if I get to go back again I can find out.

CT: Oh, I wish I could get well enough to take you girls.

LN: Oh, I know.

CT: And Jefferey. Do you remember the time when Jeff, you people were real small, and I think Jefferey was about three or four, when you were going to make that lima beans and then Jefferey wanted to get a ribbon on his head?

LN: That was so fun.

CT: The other night, last night, night before, Jefferey came, so I told Jefferey, "Do you remember you wanted to wear ribbon and your mother said it was funny for boys to wear a ribbon," and he just cried and made so much fuss. So anyways, Auntie got him a ribbon, then he wanted to go outside, you know.

LN: I know, I remember that.

CT: And I said, "Oh no, boys don't go outside with a ribbon."

LN: I know I remember that – that's a good memory you have there.

CT: Yes. That's one memory that was real funny. He just insisted on wearing two ribbons.

LN: Do you remember when I told you that you wore your make up, did your makeup.

CT: I remember. You said, "Oh my mother does it this way. Grandma you just scribble on."

LN: I remember you always telling me that. I don't remember doing – well kinda. In the bathroom, telling you that.

CT: Yeah, right there.

LN: Uh huh, that bathroom.

CT: That was you and Jefferey and Alyssa, but Alyssa was so small that I don't know whether she remembers. Does she remember?

LN: I don't think so. Wow.

CT: That was so funny.

LN: Did you want something else to eat or drink? We're going to have dinner in a couple hours.

CT: Yes I have to have something to eat. Your mother made me a small sandwich.

LN: Oh good. Yeah, she is trying to learn how to make everything right now.

CT: She is pretty good. She remembers. But when I die, she is the chief chef here for you.

LN: Don't say that. She has to be. She has done a pretty good job. And she made a pie, I told you. So –

CT: Oh geez. I haven't had a pie in ages. Just going to have a little bit.

LN: It's too good to pass up. So what was I going to ask you? Oh, I was going to ask you about where you grew up. Didn't you grow up around here?

CT: In Sacramento.

LN: In Sacramento?

CT: Yeah.

LN: And do you remember where in Sacramento or what street or anything?

CT: I don't remember the street, but I know we lived very close to the capital building. And we often, our family friends, oh a lot of them, used to go to that capital building and there was a lawn like this, uh huh. Here was the building and the lawn was like that, and we used to go there to have lunch. Not really us, but lots of the family friends were there.

LN: And how did your, Kachan and your dad come to the United States?

CT: Oh, Dad came first.

LN: Do you know what year?

CT: Gee, that I don't know. And Kachan came later – about a year, year and a half later. He first came to Hawaii and stayed there for a couple of years. Then he came to America and stayed in San Francisco for a while. Then when Kachan came, they moved to Sacramento.

LN: Didn't he, was he there in the earthquake?

CT: Yes, but that was way before Kachan came.

LN: Ok, so he was there in the 1906 earthquake.[23]

[23] On April 18, 1906, the coast of Northern California was struck by a major earthquake with an estimated moment magnitude of 7.9. Devastating fires soon broke out in San Francisco and lasted for several days. More than 3,000

CT: Yes.

LN: Didn't he walk or something?

CT: Yes, he walked from San Francisco way down to Los Angeles.

LN: To Los Angeles?

CT: With several of his friends, men friends, they all got so scared of staying in San Francisco because the fires started and the buildings collapsed and all that so they walked near to the –

LN: Water?

CT: Not water but the train tracks, railroad tracks, near the railroad.

LN: So they'd know where to go.

CT: Where to go and how to get to Los Angeles.

LN: Oh wow, and then what did they do in Los Angeles?

CT: And then everyone went to work and I know Dachi went too, not Dachi, but Grandpa went to work in there.

LN: You mean your dad?

CT: Uh huh [affirmative]. He used to carry a lunch pail and under was two – what do you call – tomato. Yeah. Tomato factory. I don't know where that was in Los Angeles.

LN: But your dad did that?

CT: Uh huh [affirmative]. He went with several of his friends.

LN: Oh, and then he went up to Sacramento? To meet Kachan?

CT: Oh that, yeah. That was, he went back to Sacramento.

LN: And you were born there?

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people died, and over 80% of the city was destroyed. The event is remembered as the deadliest earthquake in the history of the United States.

CT: Uh huh [affirmative].

LN: And where in Japan is Kachan from?

CT: From Yokohama.

LN: And your dad? Do you know?

CT: That's in the, not in the town of Yokohama but further countryside of Yokohama.

LN: Do you know what that is called?

CT: It's in-na-kai [phonetic], is countryside of Yokohama. One place where my dad and mother had a big farm that's called Inokuchi [phonetic].

LN: IN-NO-CHI?

CT: I-NO-KU-CHI – you better write it down or pretty soon you're gonna forget.

LN: Ok well, I'm just, hold on one sec.

[Break in audio]

LN: Then they came, what were we saying? Oh yeah, the countryside.

CT: And then we went, he went back to Sacramento and he was doing work for the Japanese people, especially men-folks, that used to play –

LN: Oh that game?

CT: Not a game, it was for, making a show. You know, in the theater?

LN: Um, a picture film?

CT: Not picture film. Regular, you become a man or a woman – and make a show. That's what he was doing, helping –

LN: Hmm. And so what did Kachan do? Did she just take care of you guys?

CT: Yes, just the two of us and then when we were four years old, first we went to San Francisco because they had a great big fair there.

LN: The world's fair?[24]

CT: I'm not, I don't know exactly what fair. But they had Japanese exhibition and all kinds of different country exhibitions and Tochan had to go there to write drapes for the show, all that.[25] And we, from Sacramento, we went to San Francisco and stayed there about, oh gee about a month, I think. And he wrote the drapes for the show on the stage, to hang it in the back and then also the drapes to pull for the front.

LN: And then did you live there or did you just go to LA?

CT: We lived there about two to three weeks, I'm not sure exactly how long. I think about two weeks, then we went back to Sacramento and then I forgot how many, how long we stayed in Sacramento. Then we came to Los Angeles.

LN: And do you know where you lived there in Los Angeles?

CT: Yeah, it was first on San Pedro Street and – what is that street – Jackson Street.

LN: Jackson?

CT: Uh huh, you see there was First Street, Second Street, Third Street, down this Jackson, this way First Street and the next street was Jackson.

LN: San Pedro.

CT: Jackson and San Pedro, we went one block on Jackson and there was a Japanese party doing a hotel and we stayed there about – gee about two to three months.

LN: And then where did you live?

[24] San Francisco has held three world's fairs. The 1894 Midwinter Fair in Golden Gate Park. The 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition was a ceremonial reopening of San Francisco after it rebuilt itself following the 1906 earthquake. The 1939-40 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island celebrated the completion of the Golden Gate and Bay bridges.

[25] LN: Tochan is her father, Kisaburo Konishi. Tochan means "Daddy" in Japanese.

CT: Then we moved to Jackson Street, not on Jackson, but on San Pedro, across from Jackson to our friend was doing Japanese dinner, restaurant. So we stayed there with them for a while. Then we moved to First Street and moved to top of a hotel. Building, hotel and stayed there oh, about half, two years. Maybe two years.

LN: Do you know what hotel that was or where it is?

CT: That's between San Pedro and Los Angeles Street. Right around the middle. I forgot. Oh, it was called Toyo Hotel.

LN: Oh, and so how old were you about then?

CT: Hmm. Oh, about five, six.

LN: And then you lived there a couple years and that is where you started school?

CT: Yeah. More than a couple years, I think. Tochan took us to an elementary school way down on San Pedro and Jackson. Turn the corner at Jackson and go way down to where the train was going. That was Alameda Street. We passed Alameda and went another one long block and that is where the elementary school, Amelia Street School was. And we went there. My father left us in that place in the kindergarten.

LN: Oh, ok and I remember you told me a long time ago that for like 25 cents you'd buy a big meal there.

CT: Oh yeah, for 10 cents at this elementary school, we had lunch. Soup, one cup of soup and one cup of milk and some sandwich – oh, you get what was that – pudding. It was chocolate pudding and it was real good. Then when we got into third, fourth grade it was soup and cup of milk and pudding and we used to get another dish, oh I forgot. All kinds of dish there. We could get for two cents a plate. It was real good. The soup was two cents, the

milk was two cents. Sometimes they have pie and that was two cents. We learned how to eat those American dishes all at that school.

LN: Your mom only made Japanese food? And did your dad speak any English?

CT: No

LN: Not at all.

CT: My mother, no.

LN: I remember trying to talk to Kachan when I was little.

CT: She didn't –

LN: Was that hard for them? Or did you have to do things for them?

CT: Yes, because my father was a teacher for Japanese language and he didn't want us to speak English at home. We would come home from American school it was always Japanese language.

LN: And didn't your dad do horoscopes too?

CT: Yeah.

LN: I like doing horoscopes also.

CT: Well, we had good time when we were little.

LN: And how did you get into acting, you know, you were in productions and remember the costumes I've seen pictures of you when you were little, what were those? Were they plays?

CT: Oh, dance. Japanese dance.

LN: Was that for – what was that for? Like church?

CT: Oh, they used to have a different kind of entertainment and we used to. I was learning Japanese dance, so we used to go and dance for that kind of entertainment.

LN: Oh, did you like doing that?

CT: Yeah, very much.

LN: And so where did you go to high school then?

CT: High school was Lincoln High School on the corner of North Broadway and – oh what's that? You go north aways, turn right, go down to that street. There's a park there. Well, everybody gets off at that corner and then school, Lincoln High School is just on the other corner. And we used to go up to there and car, streetcar used to go down and stay at that corner where the park was. Oh, Lincoln Park.

LN: Lincoln Park?

CT: Uh huh [affirmative]. That's where that –

LN: And where did you go to junior high?

CT: Nah. I didn't go junior high. I went to eight grade at grammar school, Amelia Street School, and from there when I graduate I went to North Broadway, high school.

LN: And what year did you graduate from high school?

CT: It was 1932?

LN: Or how old were you when you graduated?

CT: Oh, I was real old, 16 or so because I didn't get my American language education.

LN: And Michi too?

CT: Michi was lower than me

LN: One grade lower, right?

CT: Yeah.

LN: And then what did you – were you working at all in high school?

CT: No, I didn't work. I just went to school and graduated high school and then I started to work at a book – doctor's office.

LN: Oh, and then how long did you work there?

CT: About two to three years because – oh, because my father got sick and he died and so we had to take his – what you call it?

LN: Belongings.

CT: His death, body, what you call it.

LN: Coffin?

CT: Coffin was made into a smaller box and we had to take that back to Japan to where my father's home was.

LN: So was that the first time you went to Japan?

CT: No. That wasn't the first time.

LN: When was the first time you went to Japan?

CT: About 19-, gee.

LN: When you were pretty little or when you were –

CT: About 10.

LN: And so then you just worked and when did you meet Grandpa?

CT: My grandpa?

LN: No. My grandpa.

CT: Your grandpa.

LN: Yeah, Dachi. When did you meet Dachi?

CT: Oh, that was in 193- – I got married in 1936, yeah the summer of '36.

LN: Oh, and then you went to Chicago?

CT: Yeah.

LN: Did you like that there?

CT: Oh, at first I didn't like it. It was such a dirty town. Did you find it dirty?

LN: It was so – there was a lot of snow there when I went, so it was hard to tell.

CT: When did you go?

LN: A week ago today.

CT: Oh, last year

LN: Last week.

CT: Oh, just a week. You didn't have to school?

LN: No, I got out of school but we went to visit it because we had never been there. So we went to visit it, that's when I was wondering where the museum was.

CT: Oh, it's on Lake Park Avenue. Oh gee. When I see Dachi, I can ask him to see if he remembers the street number. It was the George F. Harding's Mansion.

LN: Trying to think.

CT: Is that taking it all down?

LN: Yeah let me make sure.

[Break in audio]

KT: 90 years ago.

LN: 90 years ago?

CT: He will be 91 on January the 20th.

LN: Right, right but you were really born in 1899, right?

KT: That's right.

LN: Do you know what day at the end of December?

KT: December 27th.

LN: 27th?

CT: That's the real date.

LN: Oh ok.

KT: All the offices in Japan especially the government office were closed from December 25th to January 20th.

LN: Oh so you were the first one there on –

KT: Yeah, so we went to the office but that was the next year you see? 1900. January.

LN: Oh wow.

KT: Wasn't our fault, but we just couldn't register.

LN: And were you the oldest? You were the oldest, right?

KT: I'm the oldest.

LN: And the first son?

KT: Only son.

LN: Only son, and weren't you the first son in how many generations?

CT: How many generations?

KT: First boy in five generations.

LN: Five? Wow. And what's the name, town where you grew or the city, the little place you were born.

KT: Little country town, not even town, it's a village called Hikawa-mura.

CT: HI-KA-WA.

LN: Hikawa?

KT: *Hi* is sun, *kawa* is river, *mura* is village. Hikawa village.

LN: Is it still there? Do you know?

KT: It's still there. Yeah. They're three high schools in Yamanashi prefecture where I was born, it's on the right, north side of the Fujiyama. North [indiscernible] of Fujiyama and – in this small precinct record the prefecture. Japan was divided into 49 or 50 prefectures, like a state only smaller.

LN: Regions?

FK: Daddy.

KT: It's much smaller.

CT: He's talking in here.

FK: Look what I found.

KT: Oh, where was it?

FK: Your cutters.

KT: Oh, where was it?

FK: It was in the kitchen drawer, the top drawer, top drawer with the silverware.

KT: Oh yeah?

FK: You know it's usually down here, it was in the top drawer, on top of that.

KT: Is that right? I'm glad.

CT: He never can find anything. It's always some people around here that find –

FK: See? So now you got –

KT: Wonderful. I have had those two all my life. And it almost fits in my hand now since I use so much. Oh, thank you very much. I was very –

FK: Shall I put them both in the middle drawer?

LN: Are those new glasses?

CT: Oh no, these are Dachi's.

LN: Oh oh, do they help?

CT: He told me to use – I can't see.

LN: You can see those numbers on the calendar.

CT: Without the glasses.

KT: Yeah that's right. It pays to remember. [Indiscernible]. One is Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto, those are three [indiscernible] biggest cities [indiscernible] 43 prefectures. That's what they had there when I was there and so I was born in Yamanashi prefecture which is one of the 43 prefectures in Japan those days.

LN: Were you born in a hospital or in a house?

KT: In a house, they didn't go to hospital in those days. They kept all that [indiscernible] Kofu. Well known town now, Kofu.

LN: And what was your house like, do you know? Was it –

KT: When I was seven my father left. He came over to America and we were raised by my mother and then in 1907 I think there was a big flood, no –

LN: Fire, right?

KT: Fire.

LN: Yeah, I remember you saying that.

CT: She knows better.

LN: Well, I remember because I did the report.

KT: Oh, so whole house burned down. We were living in temporary shed in our cousin's home. Then when I was there we built a small, nice, neat, little house in the place where the house was burned. Then in 19-, anyway a few years later when I was about 10 or 11, we had

big flood. The house was washed away. We lost our home again, so we built another house in higher area but then in about few years later another flood came and washed us away.

LN: Oh wow.

KT: From then on we rented a house from our relatives until I came to this country.

LN: And how old when you came? Did you go to high school?

KT: Yeah, I was second grade in high school.

LN: Second year of high school.

KT: Yeah, second year of high school.

LN: That's when you left? And came here?

KT: Yeah, that's when I decided to come over to America and go to school. Uncle said that the American dentistry is about the best in the world. And they take students without the high school diplomas, so I came over and –

LN: Did you look for your dad too?

KT: Huh?

LN: Your father?

KT: My father had a florist shop in the center of Los Angeles at the Fifth and Broadway. It was a department store called Fifth Street Department Store. And my father and uncle both together had the flower shop. Entrance of Broadway side, the department store. So my father said, "Have enough money so you can go to school, not pay for expenses." That is fine, then I was going to school to learn English.

LN: You didn't know any English when you came?

KT: No, well I took English in high school. I knew fundamental. Well anyway. Father left me after about a year and a half. Now I was living with uncle.

LN: What's his name?

KT: Uncle Horiuchi, Horiuchi.

LN: Ok.

KT: Instead of keeping that store, he sold that store. Florist shop. I don't know how much he sold it for. But he told my father that whatever I sell the store I give half to my, use for the school then instead of keeping the money he went into oil business. He bought oil well in Oklahoma.

LN: With all the money?

KT: With all the money and evidently he spent was my father's money too there and he lost everything. The Standard Oil Company came and dug a oil well nearby and put dynamite there to draw the oil. But all the oil were drawn off. His wells, he had three wells, and those three wells were dry. Weren't worth keeping. So he was broke there.

LN: And what were you doing then? Were you there with him?

KT: I was with him, I was helping him but then I nothing else to do but decide on some kind of job and work and I worked in lumber yard and I was hauling cement bags that were 90 pound bags, 90 to 100 pounds.

LN: Did you work every day?

KT: Oh yes, I worked every day.

LN: For a lot of hours?

KT: No all day.

LN: Like from what time in the morning?

KT: Oh, I think it was about 8 to 5 or something.

LN: Ok.

KT: And I was so tired I just couldn't carry on anymore.

LN: Were you strong?

KT: In the meantime, a man, Canadian man, who had small cotton field, raising cotton, he said, all his family in certain places nearby raised cotton and make a living that way so he asked me if I would go in with him for cotton business. So I said instead of working in a lumber yard why I would go to the cottonfield. So I went to cottonfield.

LN: To pick cotton?

KT: I was picking cotton every day. There was a bag about 25 feet long.

LN: Was this in Oklahoma? Still in Oklahoma?

KT: Yeah. Stillwater, Oklahoma

LN: Stillwater?

KT: No wait a minute.

LN: No that's where you went after the war, right?

KT: That's Water City.

LN: Water City?

KT: Oklahoma. It had only about 8-9,000 people, population. Anyways. This man said he had small farm so I went there and I was picking cotton every day. There long bag on my shoulder. About 25 feet longer.

LN: Cut your shoulder?

KT: Huh? Shorter. And I was there for about six months, I think.

LN: And about how old were you then? About 20?

KT: Twenty, maybe about 20, then I got tired of this cotton picking too. I never had any money. I didn't have money to buy anything but I didn't get paid for because when cotton was all picked, then made enough money to pay me something.

LN: What was your uncle doing then?

KT: Uncle went to Tulsa. Tulsa, Oklahoma and he said when you get tired of farming come to Tulsa. He gave me address. So I gave up the farming and went to Tulsa. In Tulsa I was helping my uncle in the store. Uncle had Japanese gift shop there and I was salesman and at same time I went to business college there.

LN: Do you know which college?

KT: Tulsa Business College, I think. I don't remember clearly now.

LN: Auntie Michi is here, do you want to stop and then we'll come back?

KT: Yeah

[Miscellaneous family discussions continue to end of tape]

[Tape 4, Side A – KT talks alone in Japanese, not transcribed until can be translated]

[Tape 4, Side B]

LN: Thirteen kids on –

FK: Kachan's husband's.

K: Grandma's father.

MK: Your great-grandfather.

LN: And do you where – where did he fall in there?

FK: He was the oldest or second oldest.

MK: Next to oldest or something.

FK: You have a family tree. There were 13 there.

MK: Oh.

FK: Yeah, I don't know if I have it but we did it for Lourdes for this paper she was doing for school.

LN: She had that at the same time this was due.

FK: I had just gotten back from Japan.

LN: Good timing Mom. Grandma said something, I was just asking her but she couldn't quite remember – she said that you started out in Sacramento and then you went to San Francisco.

FK: Los Angeles.

MK: Direct to Los Angeles.

LN: To Los Angeles, now I can't remember what she said, and then stayed she said on Jackson, you lived in a hotel.

MK: Yeah.

LN: Do you remember exactly where that was?

MK: The hotel that I remember is right now – is a police station parking lot.

LN: Oh, it got destroyed?

MK: Uh huh [affirmative], I have that picture of that hotel that we lived in.

K: Tokyo Hotel?

MK: No no, they called it [speaking in Japanese].

FK: The one on Willer Street.

MK: No, no, no, it's on First Street, on this side. I know [speaking in Japanese] and from there we went to Amelia Street School.

LN: Right, she said she went there until eighth grade and then to high school.

MK: From eighth grade we went to high school. Lincoln High School.

LN: And then you learned all your English at school, in your school.

MK: Oh yeah.

LN: But you didn't speak English at home, right?

MK: No.

LN: And what do you remember about LA or growing up? What would you do, do you remember?

MK: Well, I still remember the fire engines drawn – was by horse, the garbage truck was horse. Yeah, and they do their droppings, and the street was dirty.

FK: Did they used to come and clean it up?

MK: Nope. I can't remember who cleaned it up.

K: Horses are very clean. They are vegetarian.

LN: And Kachan would stay home all day?

MK: She never worked until she went to Manzanar and she started wiping dishes at the mess hall. She never worked until then. And so when she got her $16. That was it boy. She thought that was great.

LN: That was $16 a week?

MK: A month.

LN: And did you work when you were in Manzanar?

MK: Uh huh [affirmative]. I worked at the nurses' aid. And got $16. And then I went to work for anthropologist. Dr. Opler I think. And Mrs. Opler was high school teacher in Manzanar. And Dr. Opler was an anthropologist.[26] He wrote the history of Manzanar and

[26] Cultural anthropologist and community analyst at Manzanar. As community analyst at Manzanar, Morris E. Opler (1907–96) cogently documented various aspects of life there with great sympathy for the incarcerated Japanese Americans. He also ghost wrote two key legal briefs for the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) in the *Hirabayashi* and *Korematsu* Supreme Court cases. He enjoyed a long and distinguished academic career after

I had to transcribe his writing, you know, long handwriting into typing. I had to make eight copies for him and I used to type nine copies and I have to save one for myself.

FK: Wow, did you keep that?

MK: That ninth copy is some place in the garage.

FK: Wow that would be really interesting.

LN: Yeah, I'd like to see that.

MK: It was interesting, some place in the garage.

LN: And when you lived in Manzanar did you all live together? I mean, Auntie did you live with –

MK: Yeah, until I got married. I got married in camp.

LN: Oh, you did?

MK: Yeah. That's right. When I got married. I moved to the other camp that he was in.

LN: What camp was that?

MK: Manzanar.

LN: Oh, it was all at Manzanar. You didn't move to another camp.

MK: Oh no, no. Yeah.

LN: And Grandma was saying that your dad was into horoscopes.

MK: Yeah.

LN: And that he wouldn't let you guys go out sometimes if your horoscope wasn't that good.

MK: Yeah, and depends on who we go out with, our friends.

K: Had to be in the right star.

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the war mostly at Cornell University, with a lifelong specialization on the Apache peoples. His younger brother Marvin was also an anthropologist and was the community analyst at Tule Lake. Brian Niiya. "Morris Opler," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Morris%20Opler (accessed Jan 20 2024).

MK: Yeah, and then every year at Oshogatsu, New Year's Day, we had square table and this year Kachan sits there, my sister sits here, I'll sit here, and Dad will sit there. And then next year comes he changes us around because my star was on that side. And his star was on that side.

FK: Really?

MK: Every year we change. Some years a few of us, one of us would stay in the same location.

LN: For the whole year you'd have to sit there or just for the day?

MK: No for the whole year. So next year Oshogatsu, new year come like today, it's different. And then we can go out nowhere unless we have [speaking Japanese], calligraphy. You know, brush stick, you write the character. My father was a teacher in Yokohama, and he was also a principal in one of the grammar schools in Yokohama. So he has the teaching, so he was good in character. Yeah, I think.

LN: Some of them? I know that big one?

MK: There was a big one.

LN: And how did he meet Kachan?

MK: I hear he went to Japan.

LN: Did he send her to Hawaii?

MK: No, he came to Hawaii from Japan at first, and then he came to San Francisco and he met that 1906 earthquake and from what he told us he put everything in a sheet and he carried it.

LN: Walked.

FK: To Sacramento.

MK: I don't know to where he walked but evidently –

LN: Grandma told me Sacramento when I did this five years ago, she just said to LA tonight, today. But I think it was to Sacramento.

MK: Sacramento and then he went to Japan and got married. And then came back to Sacramento. And my dad had all kinds of – jack of all trades.

LN: What's that?

FK: He was a jack of all trades. He could do all kinds of things.

MK: Yeah, he did this writing and he did the horoscopes and he did the naming, like her name was named by my father, Fumino. Yeah. Sure.

FK: He wasn't alive, it was somebody else.

MK: [Speaking Japanese] that's right.

K: I think Tochan left the name.

MK: Yeah, I think Tochan, Fumino.

LN: Mom didn't even know.

K: Dad said that Tochan left – the [indiscernible] or something.

FK: Really?

MK: I always thought – that's right he was long gone.

FK: I heard we went to a man that was supposed to be good at figuring out names.

LN: So where did you get your name from? Same guy?

FK: Her name is her grandfather's name. The first part.

MK: Yeah, Ki – the character *ki* is –

K: Same as the grandpa.

MK: And my name, the midwife when I was born named me Fusako. So all my birth certificates say Fusako all the time. And when I was working at [indiscernible] there was one man who

was working at Rafu Shimpo newspaper that knew my parents and so while he was living we thought we better get his affidavit, you know.[27] So, because when I was born the midwife named me Fusako but my dad didn't like that name because that it didn't go with my –

LN: Stars.

MK: Whatever, you know. So he named me Michiko and so all the time I grew up as Michiko and when I was there working at that stationery store we decided to change it. You know. And so my first name is Michiko, middle name its, better not to entirely omit the Fusako, so my name now is Michiko Fusa Konishi. So F is always there.

LN: So you have a middle name then.

MK: Yeah, I have a middle name, two Japanese middle names, something unusual. Because in those days the midwife used to name.

LN: So were you born in a house? In a non-hospital?

MK: I think so.

LN: And Grandma too?

MK: I don't know where she was born.

LN: Were you born in Sacramento also?

MK: On M Street is what I hear. And Grandma –

K: That would be downtown Sacramento.

[27] Established in 1903, the *Rafu Shimpo* is the only surviving Japanese ethnic bilingual daily in California. Before the Pacific War, generally representing the views and interests of urban Issei merchants and big farmers, the *Rafu Shimpo* occupied a central place in the internal politics of the ethnic community. Intended for Nisei youth, its English section began in 1926. After the wartime incarceration, the *Rafu Shimpo* had the honor of being the first ethnic publication that resumed operations on the West Coast. Eiichiro Azuma. "Rafu Shimpo (newspaper)," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Rafu%20Shimpo%20(newspaper) (accessed Jan 20 2024).

LN: I remember visiting you on the alphabet streets.

FK: L Street.

MK: L Street is where she was born, and I was born on M Street is what I am told.

FK: That's where the state government buildings are.

MK: Uh huh. Yeah, Japanese town. And then my dad also taught the *go*.[28]

LN: Right. He taught that? Or I thought he –

MK: No, he taught. And then not too long before he passed away, he went to Japan and got this, what you call a degree, some kind of degree. The first one in America that he got. Third degree. Like you know *karate* or *judo* you have that –

K: Black belt.

MK: Something like that, he got his third. So my dad opened the doors for any Japanese man from here to go to Japan and compete with the men, play with the men in Japan and get the degree. So after my dad left, died, there were some Japanese people that we knew got the fifth degree, sixth degree. You know that's one of the things that I want the museum, Japanese Museum that opened in that old Nishi Hongwanji Japanese temple to have Tochan's records.[29] [Speaking in Japanese]. To display it there because that's one of the *Issei* histories and then my dad also, there was a place called Yamato Hall on Jackson Street.[30] And there was a big, sort of a show house, we used to call it Yamato Hall. And

[28] Go is an abstract strategy board game for two players in which the aim is to surround more territory than the opponent. The game was invented in China more than 2,500 years ago and is believed to be the oldest board game continuously played to the present day.

[29] First museum established to preserve, interpret and share the story of the Japanese American experience. Founded in 1982 in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo with the community-based purpose of sharing firsthand accounts of Japanese Americans to a national and international audience, it emerged in the midst of the ongoing movement for redress and reparations. Sharon Yamato. "Japanese American National Museum," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Japanese%20American%20National%20Museum (accessed Jan 20 2024).

[30] Issei is the term for Japanese immigrants originating from the Japanese language term for "first generation." In the American context, the term is generally understood to apply to those who migrated prior to the cessation

he, there was *she-bi* [phonetic] and things, you know. And we used to go see the *she-bi* and my dad drew the curtains.

LN: Oh yeah, Grandma said that. That he drew these things, for the banners for the big fair in San Francisco that you went to.

MK: Oh that, I don't know but for – gee I had a picture of that *maku* and then for the *maku* the stores donate, it's just like commercial space, this store's space, oh my dad drew a big *maku* curtain.[31] Yeah. Gee I had a picture of that *maku*. I tried to find it – for the museum [speaking in Japanese].

LN: What's this museum that was open?

MK: The Japanese museum that opened at First and Central Avenue there was a Buddhist church. Hongwanji Buddhist Church.

FK: It's the church Auntie and I used to go to.

MK: And they moved, they built the new one and moved further down toward East First Street Bridge. And so that old building, the city bought it and now they gave it to the Japanese to open a museum for Japanese and all the old history of Japanese.

K: Japanese American. Not Japanese.

LN: Is it still Japanese Town? Is it still – what is that area now? Japanese town?

MK: Japantown, more or less.

K: It's like this Pacific Square, you know where Carrows is? Ok, they are making everybody move out from there if you are not from Japan that owns the store.

LN: Really?

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of Japanese immigration to the U.S. under the dictates of the Immigration Act of 1924, the bulk arriving after 1885. The vast majority of Issei were thus middle-aged or older during World War II. "Issei," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Issei (accessed Jan 20 2024).

[31] Maku is screen or curtain in Japanese.

K: Yeah, so they are all going to that Gateway Plaza on Artesia and Normandie. All those little stores in that Pacific Square that aren't Japanese, from Japan, they raised the rent and made them move, except Carrows, and most of them are over here now.

MK: Is that right?

LN: And are people moved in then, since?

MK: Those Japanese from Japan, not the ones – born and raised here or those that came from Japan many years ago.

LN: *Issei*? And how did your father die?

MK: Cancer of the stomach.

LN: And how old was he?

MK: 72 or 3.

K: Seventy. [Speaking in Japanese]1865-1935, 70.

MK: Seventy years.

K: That was pretty old.

MK: That was old in those days, so people used to say, "Oh how long your dad lived."

LN: And Kachan was how old?

MK: 83.

K: She would have been four in August.

LN: Hi Grandma. Sorry to wake you up but we are trying to figure everything out. Auntie Michi is doing good.

MK: [Speaking Japanese]

CT: I remember San Francisco.

MK: [Speaking Japanese]

CT: [Speaking Japanese]. You were two and I was three. [Speaking Japanese].

MK: I have no idea, the vaguest idea of that.

LN: So when you guys were growing up were you always good friends or were you guys not that?

MK: One time I got so mad at her, that I had a scissor and I pointed at her and she got cut here.

LN: And did you get in trouble?

MK: Not anymore than –

CT: She ran to the drug store.

LN: So that nobody would know?

CT: The old man, he had the drug store open. It was Sunday.

LN: You still have the mark?

CT: Anyway, it was some place around here. I'm sure it was Sunday.

MK: Well, I wouldn't know if it was Sunday or Monday.

CT: We were going to Japanese school picnic.

MK: I don't remember.

LN: Do you remember when I asked you a long time ago, what was your earliest memory and it was something about your dad had a whole sheet, glass?

CT: Oh that was just me. I broke the whole thing.

MK: Nano glass.

CT: Tochan made a glass [speaking Japanese] stairway, stage. What was that [indiscernible] name? [Speaking Japanese]. It was a office. Put it in office.

LN: And how did you break it?

CT: I was looking and [indiscernible] broke the whole thing. Boy did Tochan get mad.

LN: How old were you?

CT: Gee, I don't know. Five or six, I guess.

MK: Five or six? You were still going to kindergarten?

CT: I think so.

MK: We were going to kindergarten from that hotel across the street.

CT: I was older than that.

MK: Sure, much, much older. From this hotel that we lived, across the street there was a club for only those born in Tokyo, we called it Tokyo Jinkai [phonetic]. People from Tokyo, and they had a club there and they asked father to manage that club so we moved over there and that was and even now there is some sort of chop suey on the third floor. It was up on the third floor, so we lived there a long time.

LN: And was your dad born in Tokyo? Was that why he got to do that?

MK: Well not exactly Tokyo, but Yokohama, so it's close and in those days we didn't hear too many people born in Yokohama. Then there was a pool table and video table and then my dad had *go* – no, tables of *go*. Men came to play *go*. And back of that we had a ping pong table. We used to play ping pong a lot. I was very good at ping pong in those days and so when we went to Ga-no [phonetic] Honganji. I used to play quite a bit of ping pong.

LN: And did your dad have a car?

MK: No.

LN: So your first car was when you got married?

MK: Yes, never owned a car, never owned a house for that matter.

LN: Did you want to sit down? I was just going to ask, can you think of some more things, what is your earliest childhood memory? That stands out in your mind? You guys can think of yours too.

MK: You know, when I lived in the Tokyo Club, this side, third floor we had a built-in ladder going up to the roof, and my girlfriend had a hotel, her parents had a hotel next door and we would jump over the roof to go to –

FK: Oh brother.

MK: Yeah, just down a little. And she and I we used to bring go-zai [phonetic] out and we sit there and look at the stars and look at find the different constellations. Yoshiko is still living in Hiroshima. Her mother, they owned the hotel and at the same time mother was a sewing school teacher. So she had a class at her hotel so that's when Yoshiko and I were real good friends. And oh summertime we would lay on the go-zai [phonetic] and look up at the sky. That's why I have certain interest in like full moon. I like to go out and see that, "Full moon tonight." She calls me.

LN: How cute.

MK: Because I always mention about full moon. Yeah, that was really nice.

LN: That was when you could see the stars in LA.

K: I can still see the rabbit in the moon.

MK: Yeah, me too.

K: But I cannot see the man in the moon.

MK: Oh, I see the man in the moon but not the rabbit.

LN: I didn't know there was a rabbit.

MK: I could never see the rabbit, but the man and the face.

K: I don't know what to look at for the face.

FK: Pounding into mochi; the rabbit.

MK: That's the legend.

K: There's the ears and the bunny rabbit.

LN: Is it only when it is full you can see these things?

K: Well because you can see the whole picture, I mean when it's seven eighths or three quarters you can still see the ears. I don't know when they say man in the moon, I don't know where it faces? I don't know where.

MK: We see that face nowadays with a smile. We always looked at the stars, she wasn't much interest in the stars. Yoshiko and I, we would look at the stars and we would have a grand time. And we had small –

K: Do you see a rabbit or a man in the moon?

Ukn: I don't see either.

LN: So Auntie – what was yours? Earliest childhood memory?

K: I can remember camp.

LN: That's the earliest.

FK: Stillwater was after camp.

K: I remember when Auntie Michi braided my hair and put it up, and then we went across that bridge in Manzanar. And then I remember we went to the mess hall with Tomiyoko-*san*, you know, [indiscernible]'s son and said, "Your mother is going to have a baby pretty soon." I said, "I know, if it's a girl you can have it, and if it's a boy we're going to keep it."

FK: And that's what you thought of me ever since.

K: And then they had this white butter that was margarine with no coloring.

LN: Grandma said that, and you had to color it?

K: Well they didn't color it. You are supposed to break it down and they have this little plastic bubble that – like coloring, you know, and then you break this butter down. They would just leave it white and there was this Santa Claus at Christmas time that had this crepe paper suit except the crepe paper would keep tearing, you know, and you could see the inside. I remember camp pretty well. And I had this terrible earache. I hate earaches. Daddy had to take me to the hospital in the middle of the night. He had to carry me on his shoulders and there was a sandstorm.

LN: Oh those happened all the time there, right?

K: Goggles on me, he had his pea jacket on, and I was wearing somebody's pea jacket with goggles, and my ear.

MK: I can still see that picture of Kieko with goggles.

LN: Did everyone wear goggles there?

K: During that sandstorm. And I never had an earache again until I was going to do the Ed Sullivan Show and here I get tonsilitis and this earache.

LN: I get them when I run, when it's cold.

K: Ah cold, when I was in New York and Chicago, then I would get this earache.

CT: Where did you do the Ed Sullivan Show?

K: In New York?

FK: Remember they were on TV?

CT: I don't remember.

MK: What were you on Ed Sullivan for, dancing?

K: Yeah, before the Beatles.

LN: Not the same day.

K: Before, four years before the Beatles.

MK: [Speaking Japanese] Bob's '47. [Speaking Japanese].

LN: Yeah, I was just telling [indiscernible] that Bob was in your yearbook.

MK: Dessa is '46.

K: Oh, then maybe half a year. Dessa – September. Bob is March.

MK: March of '47. Oh [speaking Japanese]. You know what year this is?

LN: '90.

MK: No, animal.

LN: Oh, the year of the what? I don't know. I don't know what year.

MK: Horse.

LN: Horse? And who is that?

MK: Uncle Nori and Tets, Dessa's husband.

K: Uncle Nori's is special. That's every fourth horse year. Twice in a century you have this.

So Uncle Nori has to go back, 84.

MK: He'll be 84 this year.

K: What year was he born?

MK: '06.

K: 1906 so that was the year of the –

LN: And you were born in 1912?

MK: Yeah, November.

LN: So what's your's, Mom?

K: She's a chicken. She's the monkey.

MK: Na, chicken.

K: Ah. Chicken, oh, I thought monkey.

FK: Rooster, rooster.

MK: No honey. Yumi's a chicken.

K: Ah, they are terrible.

MK: Ah. You can say that again about Yumi. Oh [speaking Japanese].

K: She's a dog.

MK: Ah dog?

LN: Am I '67?

K: Yeah.

FK: Dessa's was a dog, right? '46 plus 12 is –

K: '68, but Jefferey is not a dog.

LN: No '58, so '70 is a dog.

FK: Yeah, so '69 –

LN: Would be Alyssa.

K: Jefferey's is a monkey.

FK: Alyssa is a chicken, Jefferey is a monkey, and then Lourdes would be whatever is before that.

LN: Rabbit or something. I can't think of the other animals.

MK: You're 20 years old?

LN: I'm 22.

MK: Twenty-two years old.

LN: I was born in '67.

MK: '67 huh.

FK: Whatever year is before a monkey.

MK: Before a monkey, sheep.

K: Sheep and Jefferey is monkey and Alyssa –

LN: Chicken.

FK: Rooster.

MK: Ah Alyssa a chicken, oh [speaking Japanese].

FK: We used to live in Richmond and I remember trying to tie my shoes for the first time.

K: Where is this?

FK: In Richmond.

K: You remember, oh Richmond.

FK: And then I remember I used to, every morning I would ask for Cream of Wheat. I used to sit in my highchair [indiscernible] cup of milk.

K: I don't remember that. I just remember me.

FK: And I remember what I feel like was the first time I met Grandpa.

LN: Oh yeah, you went to Japan, that's when you got to wear the hats on the boat.

FK: Right, but he came to Richmond one night when it was all rainy and dark and we get this knock on the door and open the door and here is this man, he has his hat on and overcoat.

K: Humphrey Bogart.

FK: Yeah, really scary. I didn't know who it was.

MK: When he came back from Japan.

FK: I think I was crying because I didn't know who it was.

MK: When he came back from Japan.

FK: Before we went.

K: That she remembers.

FK: I never remember seeing him before that.

MK: In camp?

K: No, she doesn't remember because she was just born.

FK: I was six months old when we left camp. Then we went to Stillwater. I don't remember anything.

MK: Oh, you don't remember Stillwater.

FK: No.

LN: Why did you guys go to Stillwater?

FK: Because he got a job teaching Japanese.

LN: And did you go too?

MK: No, I was in Philadelphia, so from Philadelphia I took Dessa and we went to see them in Richmond.

FK: Yeah, I remember when you came.

K: Dessa was about twice as tall as Fumi.

FK: Yeah, I know.

K: And a year and a half younger.

FK: I was three, and she was two or something and she was already taller than I was.

LN: Is that like the Christmas picture of you three when you –

FK: No, it was before that.

LN: Oh, it's before that. She was taller than you then too.

FK: Yeah, I know.

K: She was always taller than her.

FK: She's always been taller than me.

LN: And how tall is she now?

MK: Five eight.

LN: Is she taller than you? She is, right?

K: Yeah, she is taller than me.

LN: I remember thinking that Auntie was so tall when I was little.

FK: Oh, is Alyssa taller than you?

LN: We are the same.

MK: Five six?

LN: Six.

MK: Five six is perfect height.

LN: It's starting to be a little bit short, kinda.

K: Yeah.

MK: I was five five but I'm five two and a half now.

FK: You were five five? I didn't know that.

MK: Yeah, I was considered tall.

LN: And how tall was Kachan?

MK: She was tall, but by the time she went –

FK: Was she tall before?

MK: Yeah, she was a tall lady.

FK: Oh.

MK: Kachan was a tall lady.

LN: And what your dad too?

MK: Yeah, he was big too, but not the size of people now.

FK: They really are taller now, huh.

MK: Yeah, big.

LN: Yeah.

K: Well Michelle was [indiscernible] so was Jefferey but he didn't make six feet. He's five ten and a half.

LN: So you remember Dessa coming?

FK: To visit us. Yeah.

MK: And then we – we saw them off on the boat going to Japan.

FK: Oh you did?

MK: Yeah, and Dessa and I, we came down to Los Angeles to visit my friend and then they said, "Why don't you come back instead of staying in Philadelphia?" So we went back and then next half year, we came back.

LN: And then you always lived here after that?

MK: Yeah. And good thing we came back to Los Angeles because Uncle Nori's parents were in Hawaii and the father had cancer and he was getting an operation so they told us to come see. So not long after we settled into Los Angeles we had to go to Hawaii. That was my first trip to Hawaii on the United Airlines. And boy Dessa was so good on the plane.

LN: I remember you told, sorry to interrupt you, you told Dessa to get some clouds and bring it back for you. I remember that. That was when she went to Hawaii.

MK: And just when we were going to get off, she threw up and dirtied her clothes and everything, oh gosh. She was so good up to then. But when Dessa and I traveled on El

Capitan train from Philadelphia to Richmond and from Richmond to Los Angeles and back to Philadelphia. Dessa was such a good girl. She just sat and there were children running up and down, you know. She just looked at them. I don't know. Just amazing.

K: Jefferey I knew we used to go up to see you right when he was little, and I don't know that PSA. We'd take an 8:30 flight we – and get to Los Angeles at 9:30. Now we can't land and we are doing this up and back in the sky, you know, and he is starting to wake up, so he's crawling down the aisle. Oh. There's a little kid going down. There's a little kid going down. I think he is waving at everybody that he sees.

MK: [Speaking Japanese] I should go home.

FK: Want some coffee and pumpkin pie, homemade?

MK: Oh, you made pie? [Speaking Japanese] Japanese movie. [Speaking Japanese]. If I see that I won't be going home until after 10. Because it's nine to 10.

K: Where is everybody?

LN: Where's Grandpa? I see everyone else.

[Break in audio]

K: That's when I lost my tooth because they had this concrete patio, there was like one apartment, you know, then a concrete patio, then another apartment and then a concrete patio. So in the winter there is this terrible snow. I mean beautiful snow, but terrible. In this back patio is covered with snow and ice.

MK: Give me just a sliver.

K: And I slip and fall and I – there's a lot of things of Oklahoma I remember. My baby tooth fell out.

FK: So did you –

K: Well, my baby tooth fell out.

FK: Oh.

MK: How's your teeth?

LN: Good.

MK: Oh, you don't have no braces or anything.

LN: No, I never did.

MK: Never did. Oh good, good.

K: Her baby tooth fell out.

LN: I fell off the counter.

FK: But nothing happened then. But you rolled over all the way.

LN: Dad goes, "That's the last time I let Fumi take care of you at night."

FK: That's when she was about three days old. No sleep for three nights. You know those plastic things to hold a baby? I put on the kitchen counter and she –

MK: Oh, she fell.

FK: Tipped it right over, on her face on the floor. Oh god.

LN: Thanks Mom.

K: I would get Jeff and put him up on the corner of the counter. I come home from work right, and that Michiko is there.

LN: I've seen pictures of him up there.

K: I put him up on the corner there and I cooking and stove is on this side sink over there. He used to sit there – spit up.

FK: Jeff was just really happy all the time. He was just –

K: I know.

MK: [Speaking Japanese] scratch.

FK: Well with a can of pumpkin.

MK: Yeah, but –

LN: Do you have the whipped cream too, Mom?

FK: Yeah.

LN: Grandma, what do you remember about them when they were growing up? Were they good? Pretty good kids?

MK: I know Fumi used to come to stay with us. You know, she would bring her bicycle and Dessa and she used to go round and round the block.

FK: Oh right, I remember when we came back from Japan and stayed at your house in Santa Monica for a couple weeks or so.

MK: No.

CT: Three or four months.

FK: Really? That long?

K: Until we moved to that Brighton Street.

FK: But we slept on these mattresses on the floor.

MK: Everyday.

FK: They had this really pretty Cocker Spaniel. We'd be down on the floor and he'd come up. I remember he was the same height as us laying on the floor.

MK: And on top of that, Uno-san was living with us too.

FK: At the same time?

MK: Yeah. [Speaking Japanese] He had to come along, too.

FK: I didn't know that. He came later, I thought.

MK: No, he stayed with us. He came again when we moved to Folsom Street.

FK: Yes, because he stayed there for a while. I remember that.

MK: That's when he came to move.

FK: I remember when you put your hand in the washing machine – and you used to take us to the butcher shop and the man would give us a raw wiener.

MK: I don't remember that.

FK: And then we would eat it on the way home.

K: I just remember Uncle Nori stapling his thumb with the staple gun. You should see every time at work now, every time I give someone a staple gun I say, "Now listen, my uncle stapled his thumbnail. I want you to be very careful with this."

[End of audio]